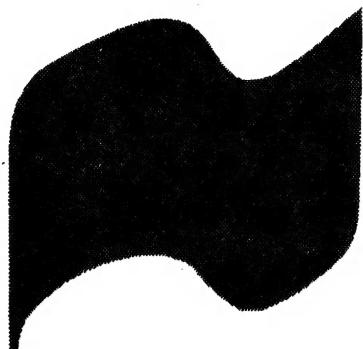


# Socialist Standard

Official Journal of the Socialist Party of Great Britain and the World Socialist Party of Ireland

ANUARY 1966 | 6d

## AFRICAN HOTHOUSE PRICES WAGES | EVANS | PARLIAMENT



Unite for Socialism

page 3

# 1966 prospects

visitors are cordially invited to every meeting

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**BIRMINGHAM** Thursdays 8 pm, "Big Bulls Head", Digbeth. (Discussions 2nd and 4th Thursdays in month.) Correspondence: H. J. Grew, Flat 1, 37 Woodfield Road, Kings Heath, Birmingham 14.

**BLOOMSBURY** 1st and 3rd Thursdays in month (6th and 20th Jan.) Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC1. Correspondence: SPGB at above address.

**CAMBERWELL** Mondays 8.30 pm, 52 Clapham High Street, SW4. Correspondence: H. Baldwin, 26 Trelawny Road, SW2.

**DARTFORD** 1st and 3rd Fridays in month 8 pm, 7th Jan. at 7 Cyril Road, Bexleyheath and 21st Jan. at 32 Ickleton Road, Dartford, SE9. Correspondence: W. G. Catt at above latter address.

**GLASGOW** Every Monday 8 pm, 163a Berkley Street. Correspondence: S. Donaldson, 37 Beltane Street, Glasgow, C3.

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**ISLINGTON** Thursdays 8 pm, Co-op Hall, 129 Seven Sisters Road, N7. (Lectures or discussion after business.) Correspondence: D. Gluck, 201 Adelaide Road, NW3.

**KENSINGTON** Fridays 8 pm, 55 Meadavale Road, Ealing, W5. (temporarily). Correspondence: R. Cain, 35 Walham Road, Southall, Middlesex.

**KINGSTON upon THAMES** Fridays 8 pm, 80 Farm Road, Esher, Surrey. Correspondence: SPGB at above address.

**LEWISHAM** Mondays 8 pm Co-op Hall (Room 1), Davenport Road, Rushey Green, Caiford, SE6. Correspondence: SPGB, Co-op Hall, Davenport Road, SE6.

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**BROMLEY** For further information contact L. Robertson. Phone Farnborough (Kent) 51719.

**KIDDERMINSTER** Enquiries: J. Amos, 31 Sion Hill, Broadwaters. Meets 2nd Wednesday in month at 7.30 pm, Station Inn, Farfield, Comberton Road, Kidderminster.

**MANCHESTER** Meets last Friday in month at 7.30 pm, The International Centre, George Street. Enquiries: A. Atkinson, 4 St. Martins

**MID HERTS** Regular meetings every Monday in the St. Albans, Stevenage and Welwyn Garden City areas (see page 16 for details). Correspondence: Joyce Knight, 30 Brook Close, Hatfield, Herts. Tel.: Hatfield 4802

**NOTTINGHAM** 1st Sunday in month (2nd Jan.) at 3.30 pm in the Committee Room, Co-operative Hall, Healthcare Street, Nottingham. Enquiries: G. Halfam, 14 Church Drive, Carrington, Nottingham.

**PADDINGTON & MARYLEBONE** Wednesday 8.30 pm, Royal Oak, York Street, W1 (near Marylebone Rd.). Correspondence: SPGB, 76 Ladbroke Grove, W11.

**SOUTH EAST ESSEX** 1st and 3rd Thursdays 6th and 20th Jan.) Co-op Hall, Vange, 8 pm. Correspondence: D. V. Ford, 46 Wellington Avenue, Westcliff-on-Sea.

**SWANSEA** Alternate Mondays (3rd, 17th and 31st Jan., 8 pm, Old Red Cow, High St., Swansea. Correspondence: J. Frances Arbridge, Marchen, Brintonwood, Llangyfelach, Swansea.

**WEST HAM** 2nd and 4th Thursdays (13th and 27th Jan.) in month, 8 pm, Salisbury Road School; Manor Park, El12 (Discussions from 9 pm.) Correspondence: D. Deutz, 117 Pettit's Lane, Romford, Essex.

**WEST LONDON** Fridays 8 pm, Westcott Lodge, Lower Mall, Hammersmith (facing river few minutes from Broadway). Correspondence: E. Warnecke, 158 Whitton Avenue East, Greenford, Middx.

**WOOD GREEN & HORSEY** Fridays 8.30 pm, 17 Dorset Road, N22. Correspondence to: E. L. McKone at above address.

**WOOLWICH** 2nd and 4th Friday (14th and 28th Jan.) in month, 7.30 pm, Town Social Club, Mason's Hill, SE18. (Discussions at 8 pm.) Correspondence: H. C. Ramsay, 9 Milne Gardens, Eltham, SE9.

Road, Ashton on Mersey, Sale, Nr. Manchester. Tel. PYR 2404.

**OXFORD** Regular meetings monthly, contact A. Robertson, 52 Henley St., Oxford. Tel. 47302.

**SUNDERLAND** Enquiries P. Toomey, 9 Gillingham Road, Grindon Estate, Sunderland, Co. Durham. Meets 1st Sunday in month, 8 pm, Crown & Thistle, High St., W.

**SOUTHEND** Regular discussions (Literature available). Enquiries: H. G. Colis, 19 Kingswood Chase, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex.

**EXETER** Enquiries: J. F. Forse, 16a Littleway, Dunstord Hill, Tel. 54367.

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**OLDHAM** Wednesdays 7.30 pm, 35 Manchester Street, Enquiries: R. Lees at above address. Tel: MAI 5165.

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**BELFAST** Tuesdays 8 pm, 5 Granville Buildings, 53 High Street, Belfast 1.

**CENTRAL** Details from Secretary, 24 Newington Avenue, Belfast 15.

**DUBLIN** Enquiries: Secretary, 5 Seville Terrace, North Strand, Dublin 1.

## SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN

### OBJECT

The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community.

### DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES

The SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN holds:

- 1] That Society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e., land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class by whose labour alone wealth is produced.
- 2] That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle, between those who possess but do not produce, and those who produce but do not possess.
- 3] That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.
- 4] That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind without distinction of race or sex.
- 5] That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.
- 6] That as that the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organise consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic.
- 7] That as all political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working-class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.
- 8] The SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under its banner to the end that a speedy termination may be wrought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

Those agreeing with the above principles and desire enrolment in the Party should apply for membership form to secretary of nearest branch or at Head Office.

# Socialist Standard

Journal of the Socialist Party  
of Great Britain and the World  
Socialist Party of Ireland



African hothouse . . . . .	4
Jonesism: a curious philosophy .	5
Anti-parliamentarianism . . . .	7
Dropped bricks . . . . .	8
Brothers for George . . . . .	10
Middle East flashpoint . . . .	10
The price of a bride . . . . .	10
Against the tide . . . . .	11
The Evans affair . . . . .	11
The passing show . . . . .	12
The Dope Pedlars . . . . .	13
As others see us . . . . .	14
Equality of men & women .	15
Meetings . . . . .	16

## SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN

The EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE meets every Tuesday at the SPGB Head Office, 52, Clapham High Street, London, S.W.4, at 7.30 p.m.

Orders for LITERATURE should be sent to the Literature Department, SPGB, at the above address.

CORRESPONDENCE for the Executive Committee should be sent to the General Secretary, SPGB, 52, Clapham High Street, London, S.W.4 (Telephone: Macaulay 3811).

Letters containing POSTAL ORDERS etc., should be sent to E. LAKE, SPGB, at the above address. Postal orders and cheques should be crossed and made payable to the SPGB.

Articles, correspondence, notices of meetings, etc., for the SOCIALIST STANDARD should be sent to the Socialist Standard Production Committee, 52, Clapham High Street, London, S.W.4.

## WORLD SOCIALIST PARTY OF IRELAND

The EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE meets 4th Sunday of each month at the Head Office, 5, Granville Buildings, 53, High Street, Belfast 1, at 3.30 p.m.

# Prospects for 1966

The Socialist standing on the brink of 1966 must survey the social scene with mixed feelings. It is depressing that the landscape should still be dominated by the ugly facts of Capitalist society, with its inequalities, exploitation, poverty, violence and neuroses. From another point of view, there is relief that the scarred body of humanity has at least survived. By itself, survival creates a fresh opportunity to do better in the future, but it is only an opportunity. The bitter experience of the past guards against undue optimism.

It is a time of ferment. There is a general will towards a better life. Social consciousness is on the move. Controversy, frustration and discontent abound. There is one thing that cannot be done with Capitalism. Capitalism cannot be made to work in the interests of the whole community. In the context of history, Capitalism is a condemned society.

In spite of everything, there is encouragement. With modification of the crude assumptions of religion a dent is being made in the barrier of superstition. Organised religion is on the defensive. Recent discussions about homosexuality, abortion and contraception indicate that sexual attitudes are freer from taboo.

To embark on a full-scale war this year, the Government could not rely on crowds outside Buckingham Palace chanting "we want war". The propaganda machine would be required to work hard in producing convincing pseudo reasons for the fight. The politicians' watchword in his relations with the voter is caution. The technical gains of the sixties have extended man's control of his environment and emphasised the contradiction between the potential abundance and actual poverty of production. These are peripheral gains that help to create a more receptive atmosphere for Socialist ideas.

On the other hand frustrations still tend to be diverted into attitudes of hate. The incidence of racism is ominous. Above all, that steady statistic 10% of the population owns 90% of the wealth, still forms the background of class ownership that dominates life. To the modern commercial animal, profit still remains the yardstick of virtue and success. Property is his God. The lingo of advertising and the subtle mechanics of the hard sell is his new theology.

Even during the past weeks, drillers struck a reservoir of natural gas beneath the North Sea, and this is firmly in the control of private interests. The legal right of profiteers to monopolise the earth, its energy, its raw materials and the products of labour is still being extended. Man is still denied free access to the assets of his own planet by the barrier of class ownership.

Socialist ideas incorporates a theory of history. It is this historical understanding that links the past with the present and gives the possibilities for the courses of action open to man in the future. Poverty, war and frustration can be ended but only by welding the whole human family together about the common ownership of the earth's resources and the means of production. This is the prospect of the future that Socialists urge is the only one worth working for.

The other prospect is the continuance of Capitalism. Unfortunately, a knowledge of society, does not give us a precise prediction of the way Capitalism will go in the near future. By its very nature, Capitalism is unplanned that the prospects are as numerous as they are frightening. At their worst, prospects under Capitalism could include world war or world industrial depression.

Other prospects can be quite certain. In the coming year, the continuance of Capitalism will inevitably involve death by war, death by starvation, exploitation, misery and neurosis. In the absence of a majority demand for Socialism, the prospect is that Capitalism will go on, business as usual, and to hell with humanity.

# African Hothouse

IN 1957 Ghana became the first of many Colonies to achieve independence within the Commonwealth. Much has been said and written about these new Nations in the intervening period and those who were loudest in their support and praise have usually seen their hopes drowned in a welter of dictatorship and suppression.

Certain conditions must be fulfilled before the idea of Socialism can arise. Of paramount importance is a highly developed industrial society in which the propertyless mass of wage-slaves is increasingly forced into the consciousness that its interests are in conflict with those of the owning class. Some workers, hearing us say this, consider the backward areas throughout the world. They see those millions of primitives whose way of life has never changed in a thousand years and feel that all this renders Socialism, if not impossible, something for the distant future.

Is it really so hopeless? We think not. Therefore, a progress report is required to see whether things are as unchanging and permanent as they seem to be. A comprehensive survey of all the new States is beyond the space at our disposal and a skimped attempt would simply defeat our purpose. So we shall look at one country only, and the question now arises—which one? Ghana, with its 400 years of western influence, would be the easiest choice, but we are looking for something less obvious. This presents itself in the Federation of Nigeria.

Here, the barriers to Socialism seem insurmountable. The most densely populated African National—55 million according to hotly disputed Government figures—it was, if anything, even more backward than Ghana in the days of Empire and generally had little contact with the West until recent years.

In the more developed South (East and West Regions combined) the inhabitants are distinct from those of the Moslem-dominated North. The Southern City has many modern features, with the motor vehicle a common sight. The North, in contrast, is from the world of Arabian Nights with its Minarets and feudal Emirs. A Nation where, instead of one people sharing the same life, speech and background, there are over 250 different tribal groups with no common language and with vastly assorted stages of development.

As late as 1920, the Governor of the day, Sir Hugh Clifford, ridiculed the idea "That this collection of self-contained and mutually independent Native States separated from one another by distance, history and tradition, political, social and religious barriers, were capable of being welded into a single homogeneous Nation". This was the picture up to Independence.

Independence was the culmination of half a century of demanding freedom from the shackles of Colonialism. The driving force was the urbanised African who had come to work in Lagos, the big trading centre. By 1896 he was protesting that most of his taxes were going towards improving European residential areas. Down the years he found himself debarred from real advancement because of his native origin and he resented serving under white men whom he considered his inferior. Strict segregation, plus the fact that everything luxurious was for Europeans only, heightened the desire to be rid of the British. The absence of a recalcitrant settler class—it really was the white man's grave—prepared the ground for the inevitable. After the war the rising tide of Nationalism engulfed Nigeria just as it did almost everywhere and degrees of Self-Government were demanded and

won until, in October 1960, British Rule came to an end.

In 1947, outside of textiles and palm-oil, only one factory existed in the whole of Nigeria. Between then and 1960 there was a dramatic increase in urbanisation, with an estimated half-million wage and salary earners. But the vast majority were, and to a lesser degree still are, subsistence Farmers. Some of them worked part of the year in the Towns or Mines, but living off the land was the main way of life. Unlike today, there was nothing else for it.

In his increasing contact with the modern world it becomes clear to the native that there is more to life than the Village can offer. He may hear that the earnings for a few hours work in Town bring a return the equal of many hours of back-breaking toil in the fields. This, or the desire for education, among other reasons, send him into the City to begin the process of losing his backward past—that of "de-tribalisation".

It starts the moment he parts from the controls of the Tribe and the ties of the Village. He must adapt himself to the new conditions in order to survive, and the changes are great. He walks on different ground and keeps different hours. The tools he uses have changed and with them his idea of himself. The traditional life of the Village with its protections and comforts are no longer his; instead, he is in a jungle where those things do not exist. New associations must be sought and these usually present themselves at work and are seldom from his particular background. Thus, new interests are created and when problems arise they may not be treated as personal or Tribal in nature but as social issues which demand new thinking. More, these new associates have different Gods from his own—or no God at all—so his acceptance of conventional superstition is challenged. To sum up, there is enormous pressure for re-examination of his beliefs, standards, values and aspirations. At the same time, the contradiction of a wage-worker's life and the spectacle of immense wealth displayed in Stores, etc., leads to the development of the idea of crime. No longer can the Village expatriate simply pick up anything he wishes to make use of. Those things are now privately owned and must be paid for. He is living in a money economy.

What protection has he? The same as anyone else; he joins a Trade Union. Here again the story is one of a mushrooming under the conditions of emergent Capitalism. Pre-war, only Clerks and Administrative workers in Nigeria were organised. There was little compulsion to work for wages and jobs were only taken to supplement agricultural income while the depression reduced demand for labour in both Government and private sectors.

- (1) Poor communications between Branches separated by great distances.
- (2) The small scale of industry—some Unions had only 50 members!
- (3) Seasonal nature of many jobs.
- (4) Large labour surplus.

Today, although still split by factional squabbles, the Movement continues to grow. In July 1964, a major strike involving a million workers took place over wage-rates and lasted two weeks despite everything the Government could throw at

it. Threats to dismiss all strikers were ignored and with the country at a virtual standstill the Government was forced to accede to many of the strikers' demands.

This growth in trade union strength has occurred in the face of Tribal loyalties and animosities. Does this mean Tribalism is a spent force? Far from it. In fact it has staged something of a come-back in recent times. Before 1960, when Nationalist aspirations were rampant, differences of Tribe and Region were submerged in the unity of aim—Independence. Nowadays, the political leaders, jockeying for position and power, are having to invoke all the old antagonisms—although the dangers of this are obvious and recognised. Also, as the demand for the more skilled type of labour-administration, education, etc.—slackens off, then those who have not yet landed a good position must exert pressure wherever they can.

In the long run the past will lose out to the demands of the new social order. Those who have spent much of their lives with the Tribe will remain under its influence to some extent, but the generations who know only City life and who receive a uniform education will have little interest in the ancient ties.

In any case, Tribalism is not confined to primitive peoples. It is present, although in modified form, throughout modern society and can be seen among Scots, Irish, Jews, etc. These groups who consider themselves different because of Nationality or Religion will still unite with outsiders for political or economic reasons.

And capitalist education is in Nigeria forging ahead. The Ashby Commission, set up at the time of independence to map-out the necessary rate of expansion, recognised that lack of skilled manpower was the biggest obstacle to development, and put forward "massive, expensive, and unconventional" recommendations which included four new Universities by 1980. Today, that target has been beaten. Four million children are already receiving Primary schooling and the plan is for an additional half million each year.

Everywhere the story is one of rapid "Westernisation".

The Lagos *Sunday Times* (19/9/65) provides the following sample. "The sleek Mercedes Benz saloon glides out of the corner. At the same time, august lady at the Bus stop flips out a miniature looking glass from the dazzling bag slung over one arm and after applying another layer of lipstick, smoothens down her skirt. With a screech of brakes the car stops and a not-too-young face smiles at the lady . . . Want a lift madam . . . and so begins yet another etc., etc., etc." The article goes on to deplore faithless women in WIGS who leave "whimpering infants" and "good husbands" to indulge in affairs. True, this is more a picture of upper-crust life but the trend is unmistakably away from the old values and standards.

Ultimately, the greatest factor in the development of Nigeria's working-class is that it is part of a world economic system, the effects of which it cannot escape. The catastrophic fall in prices on the world market of its chief export, Cocoa, has meant a large and increasing balance of payments deficit. The result has been to cut imports drastically of manufactured goods from those countries mainly responsible for the adverse trade balance, such as Japan. Thus, favourable conditions are created for the expansion of home-grown industry and one Company exulted in a full-page ad. in the *Daily Times* (21/9/65), "With the recent decision of the Federal Government to restrict the importation of imitation jewellery from Hong-Kong and Japan, our factory has taken positive action to increase its capital investment by ordering more machinery, resulting in increased production capacity to cope with this restriction".

The political upheavals which have been part of the Nigerian scene lately have brought forth suggestions that the Federation may be in the process of breaking-up into several smaller units. Even if this should happen the developments outlined above will continue to a greater or lesser degree, but the conclusion must be the same. That the part of Africa now known as Nigeria is advancing towards the image held out to it by the older, established Nations—that of an industrialised, class-divided, Capitalist society.

v.v.

## Jonesism: a curious philosophy

MR. AUBREY JONES, the Tory M.P. and former Minister of Supply and Minister of Fuel and Power, who left Parliament at the invitation of the Labour Government to become Chairman of the National Board for Prices and Incomes contributed to the *Observer* on 5th December an article "Why an Incomes Policy Really Matters"—described in the Editorial introduction as expounding "the philosophy behind the work of his Board". And a very curious philosophy it turned out to be.

This son of a Welsh coal miner, who travelled through the local secondary school and the London School of Economics into journalism, big business and politics seems to have gathered on the way very little understanding of the world we live in or of the problem he sets out to solve. This is hardly surprising, because the "facts" on which he builds his

argument are mostly of doubtful validity and his beliefs about how social change occurs are not even half true. The one surprise he presents us with is that, unlike most politicians, he modestly confesses that he does not know the solution to his problem (any member of the Socialist Party of Great Britain could help him out on this).

That the world he sees around him is largely imaginary can be demonstrated by a few samples.

Leading in with the belief that political equality was achieved by the first half of the present Century and economic equality is being achieved in the second half, he finds that we now have the "supreme power" of society not at the top but at the bottom; in the Trade Unions who force weak and reluctant manufacturers to push up prices against the equally defenceless purchasers of their goods. Then comes Mr.

Jones' problem:

The only answer to supreme power is to build up a body of conventions, of moral restraints, which will ensure that it is responsibly used. This was the only answer to power at the top. It is the only answer now to power at the bottom. And this is what an Incomes Policy is all about. The problem is whether democracy or popular government can be saved from itself. I do not know the answer.

He does not just say that this is so but builds up his case on what he thinks he sees happening in almost all the countries of the "free world".

He starts by rejecting the idea that it is comparatively full employment which gives the unions a better bargaining position than they have when unemployment is heavy. For him full employment is not a cause but an effect, the cause being that everyone, including governments, employers and wage-fixing bodies has been won over to the idea of "fairness or rough equality", so that everyone, whether his bargaining position is relatively strong or weak, is entitled "to enjoy an increase equal to that being enjoyed by others and in a general way to catch up with others". This he says "is the ethos of contemporary society".

Mr. Jones' theory deals with the increase of people's incomes but his argument suggests that arithmetic could not have been one of his more successful studies. The Board's idea of standard increase is round about 3½%, but giving such an increase, far from enabling the low incomes to catch up with the higher ones, simply widens the gap. Three and a half per cent on say, £15,000 a year would be £525. Three and a half per cent on an income of £500 would raise it by only £17 10s. Od. so that the gap between the two incomes would widen by another £507 10s. Od. It is of course, true that the Board envisages the possibility of a larger percentage for the lowest incomes, but in order to keep the gap at its old amount of £14,500 the £500 would have to be increased by over 100 per cent.

And of course, there isn't any evidence that Mr. Jones' "ethos of contemporary society" has had the slightest effect on equalising incomes, either incomes among wage and salary earners or property incomes. Ministry of Labour figures of earnings of full-time adult male manual workers show a range from under £7 a week to £20, £30 and over, with a

small number getting over £50. And the women average less than half the average for men. In the meantime the number of property incomes at the millionaire level is going up.

But what Mr. Jones does not see at all in modern society is even more revealing that what he "sees through a glass darkly." Throughout his article he never once notices the capitalist structure of society all over the "free world" (not to mention the other half). He deals all the time with annual incomes and never with accumulated wealth, the ownership of property, shares in companies, Government stocks etc. He looks at supreme power and its possessors and imagines that these are now the Trade Unions but does not notice that the ownership of accumulated wealth is where it always was—not in the hands of the working class.

Let him turn up an issue of the *Observer* for 10th March, 1963 and read there about "the fantastically unequal distribution of wealth", the one per cent of the population (a mere 364,000 adults) who own between them 38 per cent of total personal wealth, a nice little sum estimated at £21,500 million. Let him for comparison search out 364,000 of the Trade Unionists who, he says, have supreme power, and see if they own £21,500 million. As he specifically mentions the workers in electricity he might start there: or with the two million people who each year get National Assistance.

Doesn't Mr. Jones know about the ownership of wealth? Bad as his arithmetic is he cannot not know: Statistics have been available for at least 100 years. Tory, Liberal and Labour politicians (at election times and whilst they were in Opposition) have continually talked about it and promised to do something. The fact of ten per cent of the population owning 90 per cent of the wealth featured in the Labour Party Election Manifesto nearly half a century ago, in 1918. The late Hugh Gaitskell was still talking about it at the 1959 election. Nothing has changed. Capitalism has just gone on, plainly visible to those with eyes to see, but invisible to Mr. Jones and completely unperturbed by the imaginary impact of his imaginary new "ethos of contemporary society".

Socialists could tell him how to solve the real problem of the working class by ending capitalism and along with it all the structure of property incomes, profits, wages, prices, etc. But this is something unknown to Mr. Jones' philosophy.

H.

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WORLD SOCIALIST PARTY OF  
THE UNITED STATES  
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# Against anti-parliamentarianism

to establish Socialism, the working class must organise to win control of the state and turn it from the instrument of oppression which it is today into the agent of their emancipation. This principle asserts the conscious, majority, political nature of the socialist revolution.

The State is the public power of coercion and consists of the armed forces, law courts, prisons and police. Today the State is used by the capitalist class to maintain their dominant social position in a society based on the forcible exclusion of the majority from the means of production.

The first step in the evolution of the modern State was the centralisation of the means of coercion in the hands of Kings and their officials. As the capitalist class grew economically stronger they began to struggle to bring the State under their control. In Britain their weapon in this struggle was Parliament. This struggle to bring the State under parliamentary control was finally won with the expulsion of James II in 1688.

In Britain Parliament is the instrument by which the capitalist class control the State. Parliament makes the laws which the State must try to enforce. Thus the State is not an independent agent but is more or less effectively controlled by the capitalist class through representative institutions. The capitalist class does not rule directly. The parliamentary parties, their leaders and members, represent the capitalist class and actually manage their common affairs. The second function of Parliament for capitalism is in the debating and settling of common affairs. For capitalism is an ever-changing system, and change demands adjustments elsewhere. It is the task of the capitalist political parties to draw attention to, and take up, the problems at home and abroad which arise in this way. Party politics is the attempt to find solutions to these problems. Leaving the solutions to the free play of political forces has proved a much better method, as far as capitalism is concerned, than the Absolutist and Bureaucratic methods of the political regimes it overthrew.

Originally Parliament was an exclusive body with the franchise restricted to property owners but the struggle of the working class has forced the extension of the franchise to property-less elements also. The vote is an unqualified gain to the working class. It is something which was won by struggle and which could not be taken away without a struggle. It is a potential class weapon. In Britain the working class have come to appreciate the importance of having the vote, but not yet of how to use it to serve their own interests. But having the vote is itself a restraining influence on the capitalist class and the extent to which they can use the State against the working class.

The next step in the evolution of working class understanding is to use their votes to gain control of the State and turn it into the agent of their emancipation. To do this they must organise as an uncompromisingly Socialist political party. Working class power will be used to dispossess the capitalist class of their privileged social position. When the working class win State power there will be no question of forming a "socialist government." Like the capitalist class the working class can only control the State through representative institutions; those who are actually sent to the seat of power will go as delegates, they will not be in a position to use the State against the socialist majority who sent them. Any more than the State officials of today could for long

declare their independence of capitalist control. With the establishment of Socialist society will disappear the conditions for a State power of coercion; in its place will be an administration.

A number of objections have been put against this position of the Socialist Party for the most part based on experiences and conditions where both the capitalist class and working class were weak.

Anarchist anti-political propaganda frequently refers to Parliament as a "façade" or a "cypher"; Ministers are just "puppets"; somewhere behind the façade is the "real seat of power." These are arguments anarchists have been using for years under all conditions. Their use today ignores the fact that the struggles of both the capitalist class and the working class have altered political conditions from when these dogmas were first formulated. For the view of Parliament as a façade, having no control over the State, does correspond to the reality of the pre-World War I Empires of Germany, Russia and Austro-Hungary. Here pressure had led to the establishment of elected assemblies, but these assemblies had no real power. The Emperors and their officials still directly controlled the State. Parliament was a façade, Ministers were puppets, the real seat of power did lie elsewhere. One of the early German Socialists in a famous phrase described one such assembly as "the fig-leaf of Absolutism."

But to suggest, as anarchists do, that a modern Parliament can be compared to the Duma of Tsarist Russia or the Reichstag of Imperial Germany is just plain nonsense. In Britain Parliament controls the State; this is how the capitalist class rule. It is alright to say, "It doesn't matter who gets in, the capitalists always rule," but *how do they rule?* In fact, they rule through Parliament; the anarchists have apparently found some alternative and secret capitalist organisation for controlling the State. This is absurd, and dangerous, as it leads workers to underestimate the power of the vote.

Other critics admit the need for winning political power but argue that as the Socialist movement grows the capitalist class will suspend Parliament and unleash Fascism. First let us consider the suspension of Parliament. For the capitalist class this would mean the dissolution of the organisation whereby they control the State; they could be abdicating power to a group over which they would have little or no control. In the second place it would lead to confusion and disorder, with the breaking up of established ways of settling common problems. Thus the suspension of Parliament, and the consequent abdication of political power, would be a desperate act.

Once the Fascists were in power parliamentary institutions were smashed; and voting and trade union liberties suppressed. Compared with parliamentary rule Fascism was a step backwards. It is true that some capitalists were prepared to support such movements, and so were the working class. On the Continent the working class have been more violent which is often taken as a sign of their being more "revolutionary." But in fact it means just the opposite: violence is a sign of the immaturity of a working class as it means they are too weak to restrain anti-democratic elements.

Fascism did not arise as a counter to the Socialist movement (though it was to a large extent a means of disciplining an unruly working class). In Britain the capitalist class could

not suspend Parliament without the support of the working class. In fact, the growth of the Socialist movement itself will change political and social conditions; it will be a restraining influence on the capitalist class rather than a provocation to violence.

A third anti-parliamentary argument uses as evidence the experience of reformist governments like the various British Labour Party governments, the Social Democratic governments of pre-Hitler Germany and the Popular Front government of Leon Blum in France in 1936. From these the lesson is drawn of "the uselessness of the State machinery for the purposes of the proletarian revolution." In actual fact, however, such governments fail not because they attempt to use political means to benefit the working class, but because what they can do in this respect is severely limited by the basis on which they sought power and by the workings of the capitalist system. Mere political decrees cannot overcome economic forces. Capitalism can only be overthrown by the

determined struggle of a Socialist working class. Reform parties, however, do not have such support behind them hence their attempts to make capitalism benefit the working class by parliamentary means are doomed to failure from the start. The reason for this is not because the government is "torpedoed by the bureaucracy" or by financiers but because capitalism cannot be made to work in the interests of the working class. There are things that Parliament and political power can do and there are things they cannot do. Parliament does control the State; it does not control the economic forces that are capitalism. The working class doesn't need political power to form a government and try to run capitalism but to force the capitalist class to surrender their privileges. The experience of non-socialist, reformist, political action is no argument against the conscious, majority, political action for Socialism.

A.L.B.

## Dropped bricks

"LADIES and gentlemen", said the Chairman, putting down the glass from which he had just taken a fastidious sip, to match his well-groomed suit, his smooth hair and ... his immaculate cuffs. "May I have your attention, please?"

The other members of the Board adopted poses which suggested, for the benefit of the shareholders who were present, a concentrated fascination with the Chairman's words which none of them felt.

"You have," said the Chairman, "All been supplied with a copy of the Statement of Accounts, the Auditor's report and the Board's comments on last year's operations. I should now like to add a few words of my own which will, I hope, help to clear up any misunderstanding and confusion which may have arisen from certain irresponsible press reports and politically-inspired propaganda.

"As you know, your company—Planall Ltd.—was formed some time ago with one object—to promote the idea that the problems of contemporary society can be substantially solved by planning them out of existence. The founders of the Company felt that there was a need for it when they saw which followed the collapse of other firms whose business was to promote other ideas—Lassayfaye Ltd. was one and the Freeforall Company another.

"Both these companies had their uses, in their time—indeed some of their shareholders are now investors in Planall Ltd.—but a series of unfortunate events persuaded the electorate—I beg your pardon, I mean the public—that there was some doubt as to the efficacy of the remedies they were promoting. Their collapse left something of a vacuum and this dangerous situation was remedied only by the courageous and far-sighted action of the people who founded our Company, to put about another delusion—I mean solution."

The Chairman was visibly uneasy at his slips of the tongue. He sipped again at his glass, smoothed his hair and fingered his cuffs.

"Planning," he resumed, "Is the greatest idea ever. There is no problem it cannot solve, no social ailment it cannot cure, no confusion it cannot bring to order. Why did the Industrial Revolution impose such dreadful conditions upon the people of this country? Why did the South Sea Bubble

burst? What is the real explanation of the General Strike, the Crash in 1929, the rise of Hitler?

"The — answer — is — there — was — no — Planning!" he shouted, emphasising each word with a blow of his fist on the table. These blows rattled the Chairman's glass and, as if reminded by this of its existence, he raised it once more to his lips.

"Things are different now. There are fertile fields for an organisation which works to convince people that Planning is the answer to our problems. And in this work your company, I say with due modesty, is in the forefront. I shall now review one or two of the situations which have faced us recently and consider their effect on the principles which Planall Ltd. is devoted to spreading.

"The election of a Labour government was, of course, a great help to us. It is perfectly true—I don't want to upset any of our shareholders, ha, ha,—that the Conservative Party is also strongly committed to Planning, although they may pretend otherwise and although they find Mr. Enoch Powell useful in persuading some people that on this issue they are different from the Labour Party.

"But what is so warming, to me, about the Labour Party is that they stand for Planning openly and unashamed. Why, their last election programme was full of promises about it. Hardly a week-end goes by without some Cabinet Minister making a speech somewhere about Planning something. There has never been a time like it; we've had Plans for regional development, for housing, for transport, and a host of other things. And, last but not least,"—the Chairman switched on what he liked to think of as his winning smile—"We have had the National Plan.

"Whatever other effect these Plans may have their very existence is bound to convince a lot of people that Planning is desirable and that is not only good for the Labour Party but good for the whole sacred idea of Planning, and good for Planall Ltd."

The Chairman, in full oratorical flood, felt his confidence rising. With a sound like a distant wind on the horizon, the Board let out a collective sigh of relief. The Chairman, recklessly, drank again.

"Perhaps I could now mention something about Planning and Housing," he continued. "The Labour government have promised to build half a million houses a year, all by the simple trick of Planning. Most people, I am happy to say, accepted that this is feasible but others allowed themselves to be unduly disturbed by an unfortunate situation which has recently developed.

"I refer," he said loudly, "to the matter of the Bricks."

"About a year ago, one of the problems confronting the British building industry was a shortage of bricks. In July 1964, in fact, the stocks of bricks in this country had fallen to the lowest level for four years. Building Plans were being frustrated by the lack of bricks. Of course every Right Thinking Person"—he beamed around the room, casting upon all of them the benediction of being a person who thought right—"Knows that only remedy for this sort of situation is to get another Plan going and this, I am happy to say, is what the government and the brick companies did.

"The government appealed for higher brick production and the brick makers were quick to respond. Almost the entire industry launched into a Plan to step up production. Members of the National Federation of Clay Industries planned to invest more than £25 million in new plant over the next four years; the London Brick Company, which already has advanced techniques like mechanical handling, promised more big increases in production. Everything was being nicely Planned.

"But today we find that, before these Plans have had time to take effect, before the brick industry has even been able to invest all the money it planned, the brick market is shrinking rapidly. Bricks are being stockpiled all over the country—some works are putting by nearly half their production. The London Brick Company is finding that lovely mechanical handling equipment a bit redundant, because stockpiled bricks have to be manhandled.

"Month by month, brick production is falling. The firms who thought such a short time ago that the future was so rosy are now on the point of laying off workers".

The Chairman was plainly upset at the prospect of a lot of unemployed brick workers lying uselessly all over the country. He consoled himself with a large gulp from his glass.

"Why is this happening?" he demanded, and one or two of his audience observed that his eye was unsteady. He leaned forward, as if to take his listeners into his confidence.

"Because while the government has been stimulating the brick industry it has also been peping up the prefabricated building firms. And these firms have been pinching a lot of the market.

"The Prime Minister has publicly given his support to industrialised building methods; Mr. Crossman is aiming at a hundred thousand factory-built houses a year; the G.L.C. is going to put up blocks of flats made of steel and plastic; one firm recently built an eleven storey block of pre-fab flats in ten weeks.

"Now nobody is going to accuse me of getting worked up about people living in a lot of mass-produced, hurriedly built, plastic Flats"—the Chairman's voice was noticeably thicker, and he swigged once more at the glass—"But what has happened recently in the brick industry is liable to undermine peoples' confidence in Planning and then where will we be?

"And we've not got just bricks to worry about, They're busily closing coalmines and sacking miners now, although a

few years back they were crying out for higher coal production and for men to go into the pits. Not men like me, of course, who are too valuable to the country in the jobs we're already doing to waste our time down a coal mine. They wanted other types for that sort of work.

"But the whole thing looks bad for Planning. And if the government, with its resources, its information, and the control it's supposed to have over the economy, can't plan, who can?

"Private Industry? Ha!" The Chairman snorted, and emptied his glass. "What about the ships built to carry cargo which never materialised? The office blocks which can't find anybody to rent them? The refrigerators which are unsold in a bad summer? The car firms who lay down expensive factories in the hope—the hope, I say—that they can sell the cars which come out of them?"

The other members of the Planall Board were becoming uneasy. The Chairman was wandering a long way off the notes which had been so carefully prepared for him, and he had filled his glass from a dark green bottle which he had taken from his despatch case. They remembered how candid he became with the typists when he drank too much at office parties, and wondered what he would reveal next.

The Chairman ignored them.

"The truth is," he shouted, "That whatever we try to plan, we can't control the market. Nobody knows how long a market is going to last, or whether it's going to appear at all. Who knows what next year's weather will be like? Or what new sources of energy may be found? Or what new productive process developed?

"Industry today produces to satisfy the market and as it can't plan or control the market then it can't plan or control its production. That's the explanation for the bricks fiasco, for the crisis in the coal industry and for all the other examples I could think of if only I could get rid of this confounded drumming which has suddenly started in the back of my head.

"Production for the market is at the very heart of modern society. And this means we can't plan this society at all. Basically it is unplannable, anarchic. It mocks at all efforts to control it. It is true that politicians, and some other people like the Board of Planall Ltd."—he stared belligerently around the table, his eyes flaring—"Say that Planning is not only possible but desirable and necessary. But the facts say that they might as well rely on a crystal ball.

"The talk in favour of Planning is a lie. It is all a big trick to convince people that we can control a society which is out of control, and which will stay like that until all you mugs wake-up and do something about it".

The Chairman groped for his glass and, misjudging the distance, upset it over the tablecloth. In the confusion the Company Secretary saw his chance and jumped to his feet.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he cried, "I am sure we are all grateful to our Chairman for his—ah—stimulating remarks. Shall we now vote on the motion to approve the Company's Report and Statement of Accounts?"

The shareholders sat unmoving for a bewildered moment. Could they support Planning now, after all they had heard and seen? The turmoil raged in them, but only briefly. First one, then another, and finally all of them, raised their hands.

The Company Secretary beamed. They were, he thought, people who had their principles and their loyalties—and a lot of money invested in the company.

IVAN.

## Brothers for George

It is apparent that George Brown is not the only capitalist administrator in the world who is worried about wage claims.

This year promises to be a stormy one for the trade unions in West Germany, for it will see the expiry of wage agreements affecting some twelve million workers.

The unions are of course planning to get a new agreement which will give them higher wages and shorter hours; the Metal Workers, for example, are asking for a nine per cent increase in wages, a cut in hours and other benefits.

All this, however, comes shortly after Chancellor Erhard has appealed for all German workers to work another hour a week, and after the Institute of German Industry has issued a forecast of economic difficulties during 1966, when one source predicts that German balance of payments will be in deficit by about £623 million.

Storm warnings are being hoisted, too, in Sweden, where the employers' organi-

sation recently broke off negotiations with the unions over their demand for a ten per cent wage rise.

The reasons given in both Germany and Sweden for these clashes bear a remarkable similarity to each other, and to those being given by the British government for its current disputes with the unions. Consider these statements:

*Germany.* ". . . estimated that in the third quarter of (1965) hourly wages paid by West German industry were up by 13.2 per cent over the same period of last year, while productivity rose by 5 per cent." (*The Guardian*—2/12/65.)

*Sweden.* "The wage raises in Sweden during the last years have been bigger than the industrial growth and it is not realistic to think that this can continue for ever." (Spokesman for the Swedish Employers' Association—20/11/65.)

*Britain.* "Despite the injunction and the signatures on the declaration of intent, earnings are still going up much faster than productivity." (Mr. Callaghan, Chancellor of the Exchequer—30/10/65.)

If these statements show anything, it is that the same problems are confronting the capitalist class in many countries at the same time. Many of them are trying to keep wages in some sort of check, and to bargain higher wages for more intense exploitation. At the moment, however, the acute shortage of labour ensures that the unions can push their claims with a fair amount of success.

Once more, the signs are appearing that governments are trying to put pressure on the unions, which may mean that 1966 will be a turbulent one for industrial relations.

The statements also show the problems of the working class are international too—as are the methods by which they try to solve them.

Dare we wish the unions in Germany, Sweden and Great Britain, as they prepare to go over the top to meet the concentrated resistance of the employers, a Happy New Year?

## Middle East flashpoint

The assets of yesterday have a habit of becoming the liabilities of today.

Throughout the world, strung along the main trade routes, are many once prized jewels now destined for the diplomatic dustbin. Colonies that were once vital to a Great Power to be defended at all costs, become expensive liabilities once changes in the balance of power rob them of their importance.

Strong points that could command narrow straits with their heavy guns, naval bases from which fleets could operate, or victualling and coaling stations, no longer matter in a world of nuclear armaments.

Sometimes the colony was of no great value in itself, but in the power scrambles of the time it was feared that a rival could make use of it.

Today that world has gone and ideas of Colonial freedom and the "rights" of peoples to govern themselves, become

more attractive to the occupying power than to the inhabitants themselves—especially where an artificial settlement has been built up around a naval base or port, and withdrawal would mean economic distress.

Governments who not long ago would have opened fire on a mob demanding Independence, now often cannot grant it quickly enough.

But occasionally other forces come into play and then the liability becomes a flashpoint. Such an area is the Federation of South Arabia with its major port of Aden.

For a century Aden has been the strong point at the southern end of the Red Sea, leading to the Suez canal. It was seized from the Turks in 1839 and became an important coaling station, but its importance has declined. Britain is

due to get out in 1968.

But the Federation of South Arabia is part of the Arabian peninsula, which is in a state of political ferment. The Federation's next door neighbour—the Yemen—has been in the grip of civil war.

Rising nationalism and the growth of Pan-Arabism, plus the efforts of Egypt—the strongest Arab State in the Middle East—have helped to produce a situation that periodically explodes into violence.

Then again we hear the sad and familiar story of terrorist bombs and troops firing in the streets.

We also have the familiar story of a suspended Constitution, of Ministers coming and going and of questions being asked in Parliament.

Another suffering chapter is added to capitalism's history of conflict and bloodshed.

mony and the people all around and the expensive get-up and the chance to be the centre of attraction. Much more exciting than the factory line or the typing pool.

But the reality which follows is something different. There is the struggle to

## The price of a bride

What is marriage?

Exploited to the hilt by the insurance companies, the car hire firms, the caterers and the photographers, and worked to death by the advertising agencies who seem to be able to match any message to a picture of a happy couple coming

out of church, it is certainly one of capitalism's money-spinners.

It is also one of capitalism's great deceptions.

Marriage may seem rosily romantic to a plain working class couple the day they take the vows. There's the cere-

## NEWS IN REVIEW

find somewhere to live, to balance the family budget, the fear (it is very often no less) that children who cannot be afforded will be conceived.

There is also, perhaps, the eventual reality of the Divorce Courts.

And when a marriage reaches the Divorce Courts another side of it is often revealed—the fact that it can be almost a business deal between husband and wife.

Everyone knows that a husband is under a legal obligation to provide for his wife, and for any children born of the marriage. A divorce settlement usually requires him to keep paying his ex-wife a sum fixed by the court.

On the other hand, the woman also has her price, and if a man loses her he can often claim that price from the third

party. This requires the court to assess the woman as a domestic, economic and sexual asset. And how is this done? In the only way capitalism knows—in terms of money.

Last month, for example, the Divorce Court heard a case in which a company director was cited by a quantity surveyor, who alleged adultery with his free-lance fashion designer wife.

The husband at first claimed that only damages of ten thousand pounds could compensate him for his loss, but the judge thought that was too much.

He awarded four thousand pounds to the husband, but more significant was the way in which he justified this decision: the husband, he said, had "... suffered a serious loss of a valuable wife, both professionally and domestically".

This is only one of many such cases. A couple of years ago a divorce judge awarded one hundred pounds and explained this comparatively small amount: "I don't think this young lady would ever have been a very satisfactory wife. I don't think the husband's loss in terms of money is very high".

This sort of case always gets wide coverage in the press, but no newspaper ever asks whether the wife objects to having a price ticket put on her, nor whether the men in the case think it undignified to be engaged in a sort of auction over a woman of whom they are, presumably, fond.

It is typical of capitalism that while it glorifies the institution of marriage it also puts its own sordid standards on it.

## Against the tide

For almost every problem capitalism produces there is a bunch of well-meaning reformers, heroically swimming against the tide, who are trying to do something about it.

They sing more often than they swim.

Enterprise Neptune is the National Trust's name for its effort to save what remains of the British coastline from being wrecked by what the property and building companies like to call Development.

The Trust has produced some convincing—and disturbing figures. The Kentish coast, where so much of recent British history began, was 29 per cent built up in 1958; now it is 50 per cent built up. Each year, six miles of coastline falls to the developers, to their bungalows and holiday camps and petrol stations.

Only nine hundred miles now remains

of any worth as a place for recreation and relaxation. The National Trust is trying to raise £2 million to buy up the best bits of it as they come on the market.

But they are up against an enormous problem. Once development permission is granted—or sometimes even when it has been applied for—the price of a piece of land shoots up. A Trust spokesman recently gave the example of an Essex island which was sold four years ago for £1,750 and which is now back on the market, with permission to build one bungalow, at £20,000.

This is no more than an example of the working of one of capitalism's laws. The Trust's secretary recently complained that the wrecking of the coastline was caused by "... greed for financial profit and . . . enormously conflicting interests . . ."

That is undoubtedly true, and anyone

who knows the exhilaration of fine coastal scenery, and who fumes at its destruction, may find themselves keeping their fingers crossed for Enterprise Neptune.

But they should ask themselves why it is all happening. Where does "greed for profit" come from? What causes "conflicting interests"?

The social system we live under is based upon production for profit, and in that very fact it produces a mass of conflicting interests. Sometimes these interests are asserted in planning inquiries—and sometimes they are asserted in other, more spectacular, ways.

Capitalism has been responsible for untold destruction, distortion and degradation—of human beings and of their environment.

This is a desperate situation, and it needs more than charity, however well-intentioned to deal with it.

## The Evans affair

Ghouls, and those students of something or other who so carefully study the most revolting details in all the murder cases, must regard the case of Timothy Evans with a special affection.

First there was the original case after which Evans was executed—not very exciting in itself. Then the Christie case, which had everything a reader of the *News of the World* can ask. Then there was the Scott Henderson Inquiry, to say whether Christie was responsible for the crime which cost Evans his life.

Then there were all the books, and now yet another investigation, by Mr. Justice Brabin.

It is a terrible story. Ten Rillington Place was a hellish house, with its crumbling plaster, its rotten woodwork and the mouldering washhouse where they found Mrs. Evans' body.

And there among the damp and the decay lived poor simple Evans and his ill starred wife and his pathetic baby. There, too, lived the frustrated, tormented killer under the lash of the

deficiency in him which made him do what he did.

They have renamed Rillington Place now, and a West Indian family lives at Number Ten. But such changes cannot eradicate the memory of it; the place remains a festering eyesore in more ways than one, and there are plenty more like it.

There are plenty more people, too, like Evans and Christie. People who are ill and tormented or what the official

(continued bottom of next page)

## The passing show

### ~~Hypocritical New Year!~~

Humbugtime is over for another twelve months, thank goodness. It ended at around midnight on New Year's Eve when everyone slapped everyone else on the back, wished him health, wealth and happiness, and then got back to the serious business of cutting the next man's throat.

But what am I saying! Humbugtime is not over. Only a particularly cynical and obnoxious part of it called Christmas. Now will come the January "bargain" sales when well bred young ladies will scratch each other's eyes out, and the retailers will release specially made stocks of rubbish under the heading of "genuine reductions". About the only thing that is genuinely reduced is the quality of the goods.

By the time you read this, you might also have noticed the adverts creeping into the paper about this year's summer holidays. In fact I got a circular through the post at the beginning of December. All of them will promise you the best and cheapest of holidays (another piece of humbug—the two just don't go together) and running through all of the literature will be the suggestion that the holiday firms are here with the intention of serving you purely for its own sake. But just try defaulting on payments, say, on a "hire purchase" holiday and watch them drop the mask of genial hand-rubbing servility.

### THE EVANS AFFAIR continued from previous page

reports call "backward"—people who are too simple to survive in the clawing world of capitalism, no matter what obvious deceipts they resort to.

These people are inadequate, and they are tortured and miserable for it. But by what standards are they inadequate?

There is little time for such people in a society dedicated to ownership, to exploitation, to the fast sell and the big profit. Social workers battle with the problem but their efforts are puny beside the monster they are fighting. They often give up the struggle, and think themselves lucky if their charges keep out of the courts, or at any rate out of the more serious courts.

Evans never really had a chance and that is something which no bewigged inquiry will ever investigate. Whether he killed his wife and child or not, there is no helping Evans now; the penalty which was supposed to be a cornerstone of our

So far we have looked at two or three examples of humbug that you will encounter in about the first six months of this or any other year. But there are others and no doubt you can add to the list, and make it as long as your arm. In this year of 1966, for example, you will again be told to work harder and produce more, but not to press for more wages. If only you will do this somehow (no one ever explains just how) your standard of living will rise. This will be the government's bleat—ably supported by opposition and press alike, and they will pound your ears with this lie until they ring. But what will happen in practice? The trade unions will continue to struggle for better pay and conditions, just as they have always done.

The government will assure you, as ever, that it is working for peace while developing all sorts of deadly weapons and selling them abroad. The armed forces will be used—as they have always been—to bolster British capitalism's interests and if that means bloodshed, then so be it. Of course, the British government is not alone in that particularly bloody type of humbug. Only a few months ago in this column I gave examples of some particularly peace-loving warmongers, but they were mainly small fry in the capitalist scheme of things. Such as Tito and Nkrumah.

For a really nice large chunk of humbug, President Johnson's words of December 2nd take a bit of beating.

civilisation in his case worked in a particularly barbaric way.

And if the Evans affair is ever settled, what hope will there be for the other misfits of capitalist society? The people who have campaigned so long and hard to clear Evans' name show no signs of having any adequate answer to that question.

Part of the campaign has been to persuade the Home Office to remove what they say are Evans' remains from Pentonville and rebury them in ground consecrated by the Roman Catholic Church.

This is perhaps the most hopeless part of it all. For the effort spent in restoring to Evans the mythical and worthless graces of religion would have been better used in working for a world where it will be no disadvantage to be less cunning than the man downstairs who has a rope.

Talking about the Vietnam war to a conference of industrialists and financiers at Washington, he insisted that:

"This nation is ready to talk, unconditionally, anywhere with peace as our agenda . . . peace is our commitment. Peace is our goal. Peace will be the only victory we seek. And peace will come." (*Guardian*—3.12.65.)

The Vietnam affair is one of the bloodiest "minor" wars which have been fought since Korea. It has been protracted and gruesome, with some really spine-chilling atrocities on both sides. And as everyone has talked more and more about "peace" so the killing has intensified—"escalated" is the word in current vogue, I believe.

But peace, however desirable, is something which must be subordinated to the interests of the various contestants and in leaving that out of his speech, the President was guilty of the biggest humbug of all. No talks will ever be "unconditional". They will be held sooner or later because neither side can fight for ever, and you may rest assured that both sides will then drive as hard a bargain as they can to try and protect their interests.

### Poor Little Rich Men

One of the many hallmarks of working class existence in the 1930's was poor nutrition. Marghanita Laski recalls this briefly in an article in the *Observer* colour supplement of December 5th, when she cites a 1938 study of Birmingham schoolchildren which "classified only 2.5 per cent as excellently nourished."

There have been some changes since then, of course, but I never thought I'd see the day when it would be suggested that "the wealthy executive lunching on oysters, steak and brandy may not be as well fed as the workman with his humble stew". Yet this is what Dr. J. G. Davis (past chairman of the Society of Chemical Industries Food Group) has said, and it was reported in *The Daily Telegraph* of November 18th last. Now I do not want to take the doctor's words out of their context or misconstrue what he has said. He was, of course, pointing to the possible nutritional deficiencies in a business lunch compared to the workman's dinner and taking the examples he gave, there is something to be said for his point of view. But does that mean that we should shed any tears for the

poor under-nourished capitalist? Far from it.

The fact that a man may have the financial means to buy himself good food—the best from every point of view—but is perhaps foolish enough not to do it, is really beside the point. He is in the position to feed himself well and having ignored the doctor's advice, he can still get the best of medical attention. In other words, the richer he is, the better chance he stands of feeding, clothing and housing himself really well. And as a general rule, this is just what happens of course.

The proof of the pudding is in the eating. I haven't noticed any capitalist making strenuous efforts to give up his riches and savour the qualities of work-

ing class food, clothing and shelter. It has been estimated that over one third of the world's population are starving. I wonder how many of them are rich people.

#### Gaspers

"If they (the opposition) are not pleased about it, the country outside is, and nobody more than the business community." (George Brown in a Commons speech 17/11/65, on the improved balance of payments position.)

"The only thing which bars one from going to a public school is lack of money". (Lord Somers, House of Lords debate 16/11/65.)

"India might have to reconsider its position if China ever accumulated a stockpile of nuclear weapons and perfected a delivery system." (Mr. Shastri—16/11/65.)

"All in all, then Mr. Wilson and his Economics Ministers cannot take it for granted that things will move along predictable lines." (Guardian financial editor W. Davies—18/11/65.)

"By raising living standards you create demand for our goods, order books would be filled to overflowing . . ." ("War on Want" appeals advert in *The Observer*—14/11/65.)

"It is greed for financial profit and the enormous pressure of conflicting interests that are mainly responsible for this brutal destruction. (National Trust Secretary J. F. W. Rathbone, on the destruction of the English coastline—1/12/65.)

"A happy Christmas and a prosperous new year from Editor and Staff of your paper. (Pensioners' Voice for December 1965)

E.T.C.

## The dope pedlars

"Planned Obsolescence"—the interesting sounding couplet that covers a multitude of sins, something which has hit the post war capitalist world like a bombshell. Briefly, it means deliberately producing poor quality goods with a severely limited lifespan, so that the market is kept going. For the market is the all important god to be worshipped at all cost, never mind who gets harmed in the process.

Nevertheless, you might perhaps have thought that there were some fields into which planned obsolescence would find it difficult to push its ugly snout—like

medicine for example? Well, you would have been wrong, very wrong, and Brian Inglis in *Drugs, Doctors and Disease* (Deutsch 25s.) would tell you just why. This book is an excellently written survey of the pharmaceutical industry, or rather of that industry's dirty record in the promotion and sale of drugs over the past few years and after you have read it, it will not be so difficult to understand just why such tragedies as the Thalidomide affair happened. Indeed, the wonder is that there have not been many others.

Mr. Inglis points out that it has been the policy of some leading drug manufacturers to push new products onto the market at an alarmingly rapid rate, in many cases well before any adequate tests had been completed—even on animals. In fact, such a profitable market has this become that often a new drug is superseded by another before the bewildered doctor has a chance to carry out any kind of worthwhile clinical tests. The result of all this has been generally to ignore the possibilities of side effects and for the drug companies to get their project before they are discovered. And by then, anyway, they will have put a new drug on the market.

The cynical disregard for human welfare which this involves, the incessant pressure exerted on doctors by the drug salesmen (often posing as patients), the lying claims in the publicity blurbs, all these and more are dealt with by the author in over 200 pages of searching criticism, liberally sprinkled with the most damaging quotes from the industry's apologists. For instance, John T. Connor, president of the U.S. Company Merck:—

"As in other industries, our driving force is profits. But unlike other industries, the single most effective way to earn those profits is by making existing products obsolete, including our own".

Mr. Inglis draws attention also to another harmful trend in that the general practitioner is less and less able to use his own judgement when prescribing treatment and has to rely more and more on what the drug houses choose to tell him about their products. That they mislead and often lie outright is quite clear, but the doctor has no immediate way of knowing this and by the time the lies have been nailed and the drug withdrawn, some unfortunate has suffered side effects, some of them serious. Thalidomide (trade name "Distaval") was one of the more glaring and tragic examples, and was strongly suspected of causing peripheral neuritis long before its effects on unborn children were fully appreciated. Yet only a few days before the scandal broke, the manufacturers were still claiming its complete safety in use.

That all medical treatment must run an element of risk, we do not deny—there is no such thing as the perfect remedy after all. But having said that, it is still true to claim that the hazards have been multiplied many times as a direct result of the profit motive. Mr. Inglis makes this point very forcefully, but he is not a Socialist and he does not draw the obvious conclusion from his researches. Instead he plays around with the idea of nationalisation of the pharmaceutical industry—or parts of it—despite the black record of nationalisation in other spheres.

E.T.C.

## The WESTERN SOCIALIST

**Journal for Socialism  
in the  
U.S.A. and Canada**

6d bi-monthly

In this current issue  
**THE NORTHEAST BLACKOUT**  
**NO MORE DEPRESSIONS?**  
**BASIC ECONOMICS**  
**WHAT IS MATERIALISM?**  
**A MAO-IST MEETS A MARXIST**

## As others see us

WORKING class history, or Labour History as it has come to be known, has had something of a boom in recent years especially as to the origins of the Labour Party, a period during which the Socialist Party also came into existence. Yet in this boom literature references to the Socialist Party, other than footnotes as to its formation, are surprisingly sparse. There is hardly any discussion as to why those who founded our party felt obliged to leave the Social Democratic Federation. It is always a temptation for small groups like ourselves to see behind such things a "conspiracy of silence" so we must be wary of drawing any rash conclusions.

Yet this consideration alone does not seem adequate to explain the lack of any serious study of the Socialist Party by British Labour historians. Most of those who go into this field do so because they have political leanings in this direction; most are members of the Labour Party and a not inconsiderable minority are associated with the so-called Communist Party. Nearly all of them must be aware of the Socialist Party and of its criticisms of these two parties which are at the same time criticisms of their own political positions. Here perhaps we can find the source of the unorganised, but still very real, bias against the Socialist Party in this quarter, a bias which becomes obvious when they do condescend to mention us. It is more than an accident that the only historian so far to have done a scholarly study of our party comes not from Britain but from Japan.

Max Beer and G. D. H. Cole were pioneers in this field of Labour history and it is interesting to compare what they said with later writers. Beer wrote in 1919 that the members of the Socialist Party "with much perseverance and self-sacrifice have been disseminating Marx's views on economics and political class warfare". The Socialist Party, he wrote, "was very active in spreading Marxist theories and it opposed all other political parties, whether they were calling themselves Socialist or Labour. It emphasised the importance of proletarian political action on strictly revolutionary lines". Cole wrote that in the eyes of the Socialist Party

political action as practised by the other Socialist bodies was mere reformism, but it was also of the opinion that Trade Union action was doomed to futility as long as the capitalist system remained in being. Strictly revolutionary political action alone would help the workers and the only activity that was justifiable under existing conditions was the persistent education of the working class for its revolutionary task.

Compare these honest and more or less correct attempts to explain our views with the following offered by the "communist" historians, Morton and Tate, in their *The British Labour Movement, 1770-1920* (1956):

In 1905 another split took place in the SDF, when part of the membership this time mainly centred in London formed the Socialist Party of Great Britain, a body so sectarian that it abjured both politics and trade union action, believing that socialism would come when everyone was converted. Fifty years later it was still a tiny sect, mainly concerned with echoing propaganda hostile to the Soviet Union.

This view of us as a socialist sect trying to convert the world to a particular brand of socialism has been deliberately fostered by the so-called Communist Party. One of the first to refer to the Socialist Party as a sect was the leading "communist" Tom Bell in his autobiography *Pioneering Days* (1941). Hobsbawm provides a variation on the same theme in his *Labouring Men* (1965) where the Socialist Party is a

"conventicle". T. A. Jackson in his autobiography *Solo Trumpet* (1953), refused to mention the Socialist Party by name despite his being one of the original members. But the mysterious "Imperialist" group he mentions he was associated with was in fact the Socialist Party.

The one scholarly examination of the founding of the Socialist Party is by C. Tsuzuki in an article, "The Impossibilist Revolt in Britain", in the *International Review of Social History* (1956). Those who left the SDF to form the Socialist Labour Party and the Socialist Party were called Impossibilists because they were said to have held that any improvement of the lot of the working class under capitalism was "impossible". Tsuzuki's article is mainly historical but does to a certain extent discuss the issues involved. He also mentions that the Socialist Party still exists. As he wrote in another of his works, *H. M. Hyndman and British Socialism* (1961), the Socialist Party "refused to accept any programme of palliatives and was thus in the strictest sense 'impossibilist'—as indeed it remains today". Tsuzuki, unlike Morton, Tate and Hobsbawm, at least tries to keep his own views and the facts apart. No asides about "sects" and "conventicles" appear in his writings.

Unfortunately the view of the Socialist Party as a sect out to convert the world has spread from "communist" books to other fields. Thus H. G. Nicolas in *The British General Election of 1950* (1951) at which we contested two seats wrote:

Less sullied even than the ILP by the contamination of practical politics was the "SPGB"—the Socialist Party of Great Britain. This was a group of non-violent Marxists, who preached an undiluted gospel of class struggle and poured an equal contempt on every other party, including Labour and the Communists . . . Their propaganda had the austere purity of perfectionism, offering, as they truly said, no vote-catching promises. Their candidates had the self-effacing devotion of members of a monastic order.

and again J. P. M. Millar in *The Nature of Politics* (1962):

Small parties, and parties in their early stages of growth, are often lofty in their aims and united in purpose. Some remain so; these we may call sectarian or interest parties, maintaining a narrow but consistent concern, from which they are not deflected by electoral considerations. The Socialist Party of Great Britain (SPGB) and its associated parties in other countries provide a clear example. Such parties put doctrinal considerations above all others. They insist that the gospel must not be diluted by considering other people's opinions. They are not daunted by smallness and ineffectiveness, arguing either that everyone will come round to their views in the end, or that mankind is, in general, too stupid to see what is good for it. In this they are very much akin to minor Christian sects.

The view of the Socialist Party as a sect persists to such an extent that it is worth looking into the matter in more detail. In the early days of the socialist movement the phrase "socialist sect" was used to refer to groups of Utopian socialists like the followers of Saint Simon and Robert Owen. These groups did resemble religious sects in that they set out to convert people to their ideal system; they had no understanding of the social world and tended to ignore politics and the struggle of the working class. What Marx did was to turn the theory of socialism from such Utopianism into a science: socialism was the next stage in the evolution of human society and would be realised as a result of the struggle of the working class to free itself from wage-slavery. The Socialist Party has always accepted

Marxian, or scientific, socialism so that it is only by distortion that we can be likened to the old Utopian socialist sects. We do not "adjudge politics and trade union action" as Morton and Tate claim. On the contrary we hold that all such actions should be based on a recognition of the class struggle. We argue that at the present time all that socialists can do is to help the working class come to see that only through socialism can their social problems be solved or, as G. D. H. Cole put our position, the only activity that is justifiable under existing conditions is "the persistent education of the working class for its revolutionary task".

"Sectarian" is a "communist" swear word. Lenin held that the function of a party of socialists was to try to lead the working class; to take up any demand that happened to be popular and to try to win power with the support of such discontented workers. This view, though quite at variance with the view of scientific socialism that the workers must free themselves, does provide a new definition of "sectarian", namely a group of socialists who stand aside from the so-called day-to-day struggle and thus give up all chance of using popular discontent to get political power. Since we have never had this as our aim, considering ourselves not as a "vanguard" but rather as an instrument which the working class can use, this reproach is pointless. We are not Leninists or Bolsheviks and it doesn't matter to us if we are criticized for not acting as such! The term "sectarian" is a red-herring and a convenient excuse for not considering the real issue: can capitalism be made to benefit the working class?

As an organisation which contests elections we qualify as a minor political party and so are subject to study from this angle too. In the *Political Quarterly* (July-Sept., 1962) Nicolas Harman discusses the Socialist Party in an article, "Minor Political Parties in Britain". This article, though a genuine attempt to examine our views, still misunderstands them. For some reason, perhaps because of his own views, Harman tries to express our aim not in terms of the abolition of capitalism and the establishment of socialism but rather of "the dissolution of the State" which gives our views an anarchist slant. Thus Harman says we argue that the Russian revolution was not a socialist revolution because "it preserved the structure of the State in the form of state capitalism".

Again, "all leadership leads to dictatorship; only by persuasion and education can the abolition of the State be brought about". The Socialist Party, he says, "continues its uncompromising path, not advocating any reforms short of the establishment of socialism by persuasion of a majority of the people". George Thayer in his very superficial book, *The British Political Fringe* (1965), also puts over our views as if we think that socialism will come purely because of our educational efforts. The Socialist Party, he writes, believes that

only through the education of the working classes will pure Marxist Socialism be achieved. It does not imply that capitalism and the parliamentary system can be reformed. Capitalism must be destroyed, it believes, but only when the working classes have a "conscious understanding and desire for Socialism". At that time, capitalism will peacefully disappear and Socialism will take its place . . . They keep on struggling . . . secure in the belief that when their brand of Socialism arrives they will have properly educated the working classes not only to accept its arrival but to welcome it as well.

Both Harman and Thayer misunderstand our position and make us out to hold views which would justly lay us open to the charge of being a mere sect—that we are out to convert the world to our "brand of Socialism". Perhaps some of our activities might suggest, to a superficial observer, such an interpretation. Still those who fancy themselves fit to write books should take the trouble to go beyond mere appearances. They have no real excuse for misunderstanding us especially as they are given literature to read which clearly explains the theory behind our practice. As Marxists, we accept the validity of historical materialism and do not subscribe to any facile theory of social change.

Before summing up, we must mention the not unfriendly reference to us in *A Faith to Fight For* (1964) by Eric Deakins. The author, a member of the Labour Party, does discuss our view that "socialism will only come about when the workers recognise that it is in their economic interest to create a Socialist society". What is important about this book is that it represents a breakthrough: our views are actually discussed in a serious book on politics. We can only hope that Deakins has set a precedent.

A.I.B.

## Equality of men and women

Along with the emancipation of the capitalist from the necessity of any form of personal labour proceeded the releasing of his wife from household duties, which more and more devolved upon hired servants. Likewise the divorce between ownership and work made it easier for such women to inherit property direct with all the advantages of the same. Hence their modern demand for political influence.

On the other hand, a similar equalising of the sexes took place among the workers. Deprived by machinery of the market value of his skill and muscular power, the handi-

craftsman was replaced by the wage-labourer, who owned no means of life but was compelled to sell himself to toil for another; his women-folk therefore became in reality, dependent, not on him, but upon the capitalist, while his family authority as father or husband degenerated into an obligation to send his wife and children out to earn wages in order to restore, however partially, the family income to the level of his former position had enabled him to maintain. Thus the male labourers are compelled to cut their own throats, so to speak, for the employment of women and

children, once established, tends progressively to supplant the labour of men along with the advance of machinery. Whereas formerly the man was the bread-winner-in-chief, now the whole family offers itself for the consumption by Capital of its productive efforts.

Thus modern industry has abolished economic distinctions between the sexes of the working class, not by raising woman to man's level, but, by the abolition of his property, reducing him to hers', worsening the conditions of both to an intense degree. From the *Socialist Standard*, Jan. 1916.

# Meetings

## HEAD OFFICE

A series of lectures and discussions at  
52 Clapham High Street, London  
SW4

Thursdays 8 pm

13th January  
**POLITICS — 1966**

*At the following three meetings a representative of the organisations named will provide the main speaker. A member of the SPGB will reply from the platform followed by questions and discussion.*

20th January  
**ANARCHISM**

27th January  
**CND**

3rd February  
**ANTI-APARTHEID MOVEMENT**

**ISLINGTON**  
Co-op Hall, 127 Seven Sisters Rd., N.1  
Thursday, 13th January, 1966, at 8 pm  
**KIBBUTZ IN CAPITALISM**

**KIDDERMINSTER**  
Station Inn, Farfield  
Comberton Road  
Wednesdays 7.30 pm  
January 12th  
**SOCIALISM & EDUCATION**  
Speaker: K. Knight

**HACKNEY**  
Hackney Trades Hall, Valletta St., E9  
(facing Hackney Empire)  
Wednesdays, 8.30 pm

January 12th  
**INDIA TODAY**  
Speaker: Michael

January 26th  
**RUSSIA VISITED**  
Speaker: D. Hidson

**BOOKS RECEIVED**  
Insight into government  
by Lord Craigton  
Pitman, 21s.

## CENTRAL LONDON

Asquith Room, 2 Soho Square, W1  
Sundays 8 pm (doors open 7.30 pm)

January 2nd, 1966

**IRISH REBELS and their causes**  
Speaker: A. Fahy

January 9th

**The current situation  
in EDUCATION**  
Speaker: K. Knight

January 16th

**ART & THE CAPITALIST**  
Speaker: C. Devereaux

January 23rd

**PARTIES & POLITICS IN  
BELGIUM**

Speaker: J. Carter

January 30th

**ASPECTS OF THE  
DEVELOPMENT OF MUSIC**  
Speaker: F. James

## WEST LONDON

Westcott Lodge, Lower Mall  
Hammersmith (facing river few  
minutes from Broadway)  
Fridays 8 pm

January 14

**IMMIGRATION INTO THE USA**  
Speaker: L. Dale

January 21st

**THE GROWTH OF PARLIAMENT**  
Speaker: J. Law

## STEVENAGE

Bedwell Community Centre

Monday 3rd January 8 pm  
**THE YOUNG SOCIALIST  
CONFERENCE**  
A Discussion

Monday 17th January 8 pm

**THE ENGLISH REVOLUTION (2)**  
Speaker: L. Dale

## ST. ALBANS

Peahen Hotel, London Road  
Monday 24th January 7.30 pm  
**LABOUR FAILS AGAIN**  
Speaker: A. Fahy

## GLASGOW MEETINGS

Woodside Public Halls  
Sundays 7.30 pm

January 9th

**SPORT IN A SICK SOCIETY**  
Speaker: V. Vanni

January 16th

**THE ADVERTISING JUNGLE**  
Speaker: J. Fleming

January 23rd

**THE MISERY GO-ROUND**  
Speaker: C. McEwen

January 30th

**THE BLACKBOARD JUNGLE**  
Speaker: I. McDougall

## GLASGOW STUDY CLASSES

Thursday 8 pm, Branch Rooms  
163a Berkeley street

GROUP 2

**"BARRIERS TO SOCIALISM"**

January 6th, 1966

**TROTSKYISM**

January 13th

**REFORMISM**

January 20th

**INDIVIDUALISM**

## LONDON OUTDOOR MEETINGS

Sundays

Hyde Park, 3 and 6 pm  
East Street, Walworth  
January 2nd and 9th (11 am)  
January 9th and 30th (noon)  
January 23rd (1 pm)

Mondays

Lincoln's Inn Fields, 1-2 pm

Wednesdays

Charing Cross Tube Station  
(Villiers Street) 8 pm

Thursdays

Tower Hill, 12.30-2 pm  
Earls Court, 8 pm  
Bromley Library, 8.30 pm

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